



Fall Newsletter

Tom and Karen Chapman care coordination services

Marcus
AUTISM CENTER

NIH Autism Center
of Excellence



A spooktacular Halloween

Fall is in the air, and, so is that sense of hesitation for parents thinking about Halloween. To help alleviate some of the stress that could be bubbling up, we've put together a few ideas to help make the occasion a treat for your child this year.

- **Join in on the fun (if you want to).** Participate if it's something you'll both enjoy, but don't feel obligated.
- **Knock on your neighbors' doors.** Take something your child likes (if she doesn't care for candy) for your friends to hand out.
- **Keep it comfortable—and easy.** Avoid scratchy costumes by making something festive for your child to wear out of a fleece hoodie or cozy PJ's.
- **Role-play.** A few weeks beforehand, practice at home by having your child knock on the door to say "trick or treat" and giving her healthy goodies.
- **Put it on paper.** If your child has trouble communicating, have her hand out Halloween cards and maybe even use the time as an opportunity to spread autism awareness.

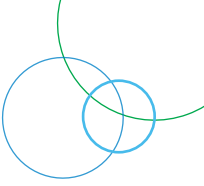
Thanksgiving prep

Helping your child manage the abundance of excitement and food during the holidays takes some planning. We're here to offer some ideas on ways you can make Thanksgiving a time everyone can be grateful for.

Try talking with your family about keeping noise at a level that won't cause your child to be uncomfortable. Work with her therapist to help her learn when to take breaks from the excitement, along with skills to deal with disappointment.

As for eating healthy and using proper table manners, be sure to monitor the snack zone and serve your child's food with smaller portions at mealtime. When you see your child socializing or playing appropriately, praise her for it!





A good night's sleep

Maintaining healthy sleep habits can be a challenge for kids with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), especially during the holidays. The excitement of visitors, abundance of treats and changes in routines are all very common this time of year.

If your child has difficulty getting to sleep or sleeping through the night, speak with a professional to rule out any medical issues. Visit choa.org/sleep for more information about physicians, treatment options and ways to work on positive behaviors for bedtime.

It's helpful to establish a routine for the same time each night, such as putting on pajamas, brushing teeth, reading a favorite book or completing a sensory integration activity. To improve your child's quality of sleep, minimize environmental stimuli such as bright lights or disruptive sounds, and make sure her bedroom's temperature and the texture of her pajamas and bedding are comfortable.

While the holidays are filled with all kinds of magical surprises, a simple, good night's sleep is a gift everyone can appreciate.

We need research volunteers

At Marcus Autism Center, we're committed to providing the best possible care for kids living with ASD now and to transforming the future of ASD through research. Because of our mission, we are always looking for study participants.

Visit marcus.org/research or call **404-785-7600** to learn more about our research program.



Upcoming events at Marcus Autism Center

Visit marcus.org for more information about parent workshops, family activities and community events.

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